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Nation-building in post-Soviet Russia: What kind of nationalism is produced by the Kremlin?

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ABSTRACT

After collapse and subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union, post-Soviet Russia faced typical problems of state-building and nation-building. Nations are assumed as political communities of Modernity. They are constructed in the process of nation-building and are based on nationalism, defined as worldview which perceives social reality through the prism of dividing the world into nations-states. Nation-building is a discursive process where state's activities predefine the type of nationalism being rooted. Using as a starting point 'civic versus ethnic nationalism' dichotomy, the article develops a transformed version of this typology, which is based on two dimensions: model of national membership (openness/closeness) and model of interaction among members (universalism/hierarchical particularism). The analysis of Annual Addresses of the Russian Presidents demonstrates that the Kremlin certainly produces open model of national membership. The key feature of 'Russianness' in the Kremlin discourse is commitment to the Russian culture where anyone can be recognized as 'Russian' as long as he/she shares the Russian cultural values. At the same time, the openness is combined with neglect of 'civicism'. In contrast to 'civicism', which is based on rational notions of equal rights and responsibilities and universalistic patterns of behavior, the Kremlin image of Russian nation focuses on rather sacral idea of 'the Russian way', great historical mission as the destination of Russia. Openness of nationalism entails permanent expansion of the nation 'outside itself' in order to 'absorb' those groups who are able to accept Russian culture. Since the acceptance requires definite period of time, at any point of time Russian nation includes both 'core of the nation' and 'aspirants' that are in hierarchical order. Consequently, from the point of the second dimension, Russian nationalism falls into the category of hierarchical particularism.

The collapse and subsequent disintegration of the Soviet Union entailed a sharp crisis of political identity. Russia had to find new foundations of its political existence. In spite of fairly long historical political legacy, post-Soviet Russia was a new state which faced typical problems of state-building and nation-building. In the beginning of 1990s, newly formed Russian citizens expressed uncertainty in understanding Russia's political community let alone the country's future. However, twenty years later, we can observe evident shifts towards political stabilization supported by ongoing process of nation-building. Since transition to Modernity, national states have become a universal political form and have spread over the world. Nevertheless, nation-states show a huge variety; and it has not yet been clear what kind of

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nation is arising in post-Soviet Russia. It is this issue that is the primary focus of the article.

In the first part, following a brief review of scholarly contributions in the field, I argue that nations should be assumed as political communities of Modernity. They are constructed in the process of nation-building and are based on nationalism (worldview which is inherent in Modernity). Nationalism supposes the perception of social reality through the prism of dividing the world into nation-states. It is the specific categorization that allows making a distinction between the people and produces a feeling of belonging to the nation. Nevertheless, concrete nationalisms differ considerably; therefore, the second part of the article is devoted to the typology of nationalism. Starting from famous distinction 'civic versus ethnic' nationalism, I discuss its advantages and disadvantages and develop a transformed version of this typology which is based on two dimensions: model of national membership (openness/closeness) and model of interaction among members (universalism/particularism). Nation-building is, first of all, a discursive process; and what type of nationalism emerges from it depends on the discursive activity of the state. That is why the third part of the article focuses on official political discourse, in particular, on the Kremlin nationalist discourse. To support my findings, I present the results of empirical analysis of annual presidential addresses to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation.

1. Nations as political communities of modernity

It is conventional wisdom that nation and nationalism are one of the most disputed concepts of contemporary social sciences. For many years the main intellectual cleavage among scholars concerned the very nature of nations. While primordialists considered nations as natural and eternal entities that existed 'objectively', their opponents – constructivists – believed that nations were the products of social imagination, and the results of the definite interpretation of social reality. But now, "few if any scholars would argue that ethnic groups or races or nations are fixed or given; virtually everyone agrees that they are historically emergent and in some respects mutable…. In this sense, we are all constructivists now" (Brubaker, 2009, p. 28). Therefore, the key point of discussion has shifted toward the issues of origin of nations and nationalisms, categorical distinctiveness of nations and ethnicity, and so forth.

Although constructivist way of thinking as such does not impede to treat nations as very old entities inherited from medieval and maybe even ancient ages (Gorski, 2006), most scholars share the opposite view. Debating heatedly on the question of historical explanations of the rise of nations, they, nevertheless, agree that nations are phenomenon of Modernity. I suppose, 'modernist' treatment of nations is quite reasonable and even necessary in the light of comparative historical analysis.

The basic idea is that modern political reality is fundamentally different from the pre-modern world. This distinction is caught best in famous dichotomy of 'center – periphery' that was developed by Edward Shils. He has argued that political dominance of the center is based on both institutional and cultural systems. The former refers to 'central system of authority'. The latter "consists of those beliefs and expressive symbols which are concerned with the central institutional system and with 'things' which transcend the central institutional system and which reflect on it" (Shils, 1982, p. 58). Consequently, it is the central cultural system that ensures cultural commonality – shared senses, meanings, and worldview – for the members of polity. Such a commonality produces the feeling of belonging to the polity, political identity, and ultimately shapes political community.

Nevertheless, Edward Shils has pointed out that in premodern polities "Much of the periphery, for most of the time and in most spheres of action and belief, lies outside the radius of effectiveness of the center. The outermost fringes of the periphery remains very remote and, except for the occasional and ill-administered collection of taxes and tribute and the occasional imposition of certain services, the periphery is left alone. These remote zones of the periphery, which might include most of the population of the society, have their own relatively autonomous centers" (Shils, 1982, pp. 60–61). So far as these relatively autonomous centers existed, they had their own central institutional and cultural systems and gained political significance. Here one can see the type of polities which is designated by Yale Ferguson and Richard Mansbach as 'nested polities,' "the phenomenon in which some polities are encapsulated by others and embedded within them" (Ferguson & Mansbach, 1996, p. 48).[1] In other words, polities of this type did not strive to integrate the people into one union and create a single political identity. Through various types of groups such as tribes, ethnic groups, local collectivities and estates, individuals 'participated' in 'big polity'. It was presumed the fairly strong group identities. 'Nested centers' mediated interactions between the 'big center' and the population. On the one hand, the 'big center' used them for its own purposes. On the other hand, they defended their own members from the excessive pressure of the 'big center' (Badie, 2000, pp. 54–55). To be sure, the boundaries between the 'big center' and the 'nested centers' were blurred, moreover, 'big centers' did not aspire to establish distinct boundaries even between themselves (Giddens, 1984; Mann, 1986).

In this sense modern polities fundamentally differ from the pre-modern ones. "Whereas in some societies, where there is a major center there are also minor centers, the existence of which diminishes the centrality of the major center, in the societies of the type of which we wish to take note at this point, there is a center which excludes all other centers and seeks to preempt their functions. To put it somewhat differently, the periphery of the type of society under consideration is under more intense, more continuous impingement from the center… The center dominates and saturates the periphery – at least it aspires to do so and to some extent it succeeds. The society becomes more

[1] In addition, Ferguson and Mansbach uncover the type of 'overlapping and layering polities': "Interaction among polities that occupy some or all of the same space constitute a vertical dimension of political life" (Ferguson & Mansbach, 1996, p. 49). Here some centers have approximate equal political significance; and none of polities plays the role of 'big centre' for 'nested polities'.

integrated – from the center outward – in belief and in action" (Shils, 1982, p. 60).

Consequently, the key process of political modernization is that the single center eliminates all other centers both institutionally and culturally (Eisenstadt & Schluchter, 1998). Institutionally, modern polities assume the building of national state. Although, sometimes the term 'state' is used for the designation of institutional organization of all polities, it is not correct. Strictly speaking, the state is an 'invention' of modern polities, because only here, "A single center of rule has established its exclusive entitlements to control and employ the ultimate medium of political activity – organized violence – over a definite territory… If in the territory alternative seats of power can act with impunity on the assumption that it cannot, then you no longer have a state, but some other kind of polity" (Poggi, 2008, p. 87; see also Skinner, 1989). Culturally, the elimination of all other centers requires the emergence of new political identity. Such an identity is not merely one more identity, but a new type of identity. It covers all other group identities, thereby eliminating their political significance, and originates a new type of political community. Because it is a new type, we need a new concept, and, I suppose, the usage of 'nations' just for the designation of modern political communities seems to be absolutely reasonable.

What is precisely new in nations in terms of modern political communities? First, nation is strongly connected with the state as a special type of institutional system of polity. The elimination of all other institutional centers and the formation of the state as the only source of authority, which has the sovereignty over definite territory, need appropriate legitimacy. The members of modern polities (citizens) must perceive themselves as a whole entity, belonging to the state. It has to be noted that even if the nation has not owned a state, as a rule, it aspires to find the state, and it is such an aspiration that transforms the community of people into the nation. It means that nations are genuinely political communities, while all other kinds of communities (ethnical, tribal, religious, etc.) may or may not have political significance. Some of them could be 'nested polities' in pre-modern epoch, but all of them have lost political significance in modern polities. Third, the only way to eliminate political significance of all other communities is to develop the perception that all members of a nation are equal in the face of the state, while all other communities, identities, and hierarchies have become unimportant in respect to the state. It is the idea of equality that gives rise to the national identity. In contrast to pre-modern polities, national identity presupposes that individuals belong to political community directly but not as the members of particular groups. As Larry Siedentop notes, "State sovereignty over individuals involved the emergence of what can be called a primary role shared equally by all, while other social roles – whether that of father, government official or hairdresser – become secondary in relation to that primary role" (Siedentop, 2001, p. 85).

It has to be emphasized that national identity, as well as any other group identity is not a mere feeling of belonging to the community. Conversely, the feeling of belonging stems from definite interpretation of the world. "Identity can be understood as an aspect of one's cognitive map that concerns the configuration and structure of one's self in the relation to the social world. The cognitive map is the image of the social order held by a given social actor…" (Greenfeld & Eastwood, 2007, p. 256; see also Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). That is why, as Michael Sandel remarks, "to say that the members of a society are bound by a sense of community is not simply to say that a great many of them profess communitarian sentiments and pursue communitarian aims, but rather that they conceive their identity … as defined to some extent by the community of which they are part of. For them community describes not just what they have as fellow citizens, but also what they are, not a relationship they choose (as in a voluntary association) but an attachment they discover, not merely an attribute but a constituent of their identity" (Sandel, 1982, p. 150).

A worldview that shapes a nation refers to nationalism. Nationalism is defined as the most fundamental image of the social order in modernity (Greenfeld & Eastwood, 2007); the way of constructing collective identities in the circumstance of modern states (Calhoun, 1997); the way of making sense of the modern world (Brubaker, 2009). It is also possible to define nationalism in terms of 'ideology' or 'culture' if to understand them as webs of significance (Geertz, 1975). All these definitions are based on social constructivist approach, which in opposition to essentialist thinking, considers the world not as "objectively existing reality", but as that which people come to take into account, attach importance to, describe, etc. In other words, for any thing to be meaningful, it must be signified. In the process of social interactions people develop common categorizations (distinctions) that provide them with a possibility to signify certain aspects of things and not take into consideration of other aspects (Berger & Luchmann, [1990] 1966). The systems of categorization do not only classify the world but also establish ground for the institutional system of polity and legitimate political order (Verdery, 1996, p. 226). Nationalist worldview entails very special and unusual for the most of human history way of categorization. It "represents the human world as divided into concrete communities, coextensive with the mass of the population or the 'people' which are themselves imagined (in ideal form anyway) as being fundamentally unstratified" (Greenfeld & Eastwood, 2007, p. 258). It is not accidentally that Benedict Anderson defines nations as 'imagined communities' (Anderson, 1991) although, strictly speaking, any community is a result of 'social imaginary' (Taylor, 2004).

Finally, it has to be emphasized 'a dynamic and processual understanding' of nations (Brubaker, 2009). Any communities of people, including nations, as well as any identities and worldviews, including nationalisms, are not fixed or 'completed' things. Conversely, they are rather 'processes', they 'exist' so far as they are reproduced in social practices. It refers to the concept of 'nation-building' that can be defined as the process of constructing and reproducing a national identity.

Nation-building is the aspiration to justify and explain why the population of the state is a whole entity. It means that nation-builders have to provide the people with appropriate notions, reasonable categorizations, cognitive schemes, narratives, myths, and so forth. That is why nation-building is a predominantly discursive process.

Katherin Verdery in her famous definition accurately draws attention to discursive nature of nationalism, "Nationalism, in this perspective, is a political utilization of the symbol of nation through discourse and political activity, as well as the sentiment that draws people into responding to this symbol's use" (Verdery, 1996, p. 226).

Nationalist discourse is certainly political activity, since the process of nation-building is inseparable from the process of modern state-building.[2] In this sense, modern statesmen are all nationalists now.[3] Although the state seems to be the most important nation-builder, not only statesmen but also many other political actors participate in the nationalists discourse and nation-building process. They dispute with each other because they hold different notions concerning their own nation, since very different set of notions enables to construct national identity; and peoples' perception of themselves as the nation can be explained and justified through different ways. Variety of nationalisms requires discussing in more detail the question of the types of nationalism.

2. Types of nationalism

The starting point for the typology of nationalism is shaped by striking distinction between the earlier and the subsequent nationalisms. Most scholars agree that initially nationalism was strongly connected with democracy. Indeed, despite of significant differences between English, French, American and other nationalisms, in all of these cases the idea of nation was the most important building block for democracy. It is possible to say that modern democratic idea was born as a national idea (Greenfeld, 1992). In other words, early nations were assumed not merely as modern political communities but as 'peoples' who were the only source of power. It was not surprising that belonging to the nation was perceived as citizenship. As Bryan Turner notes, "Premodern forms of citizenship were associated with the city, not with the nation… modern citizenship is a political product of major revolutions… These revolutions were important because they destroyed the system of estates and created both modern nationalism and citizenship" (Turner, 2006, p. 227). Democratic national citizenship entailed that the members of the nation not only had equal rights and responsibilities but also participated in democratic political process (Kymlicka and Norman, 1995, p. 301).

Nevertheless, as the process of political modernization and nation-state building spread over the world, initial content of national idea has transformed to a great extent. The key issue here is that in Modernity nations have become 'modular form' of political communities (Anderson, 1991). In other words, political communities are supposed to be the nations, since the world political order is based on the system of sovereign states, which have yet remained the typical and, actually, only possible form of polity. Consequently, 'new states', the number of which has increased enormously, especially after de-colonization of the middle of the XX century, have to follow requests of modern political order. They declare themselves as nation-states but their foundations are certainly not the same as in Western polities. As far back as the middle of the XX century scholars concluded that in most of 'new states' nationalisms significantly differed from Western model of 'liberal, civic, and democratic' nationalism. Hans Kohn has expressed this in a famous dichotomy 'civic versus ethnic nationalisms' (Kohn, 1944). Such distinction and also some similar ones – 'Western versus Eastern', 'political versus cultural' nationalisms – has been held by many researchers (Calhoun, 2007). Some scholars distinguish 'good' (liberal, democratic, peaceful) and 'bad' (xenophobic, particularistic, authoritarian) nationalisms (Kymlicka, 1999).

The 'civic versus ethnic' dichotomy has been enriched by Liah Greenfeld in her comparative study of nationalisms. She has revealed a strong difference between French and Anglo-Saxon nationalisms, although they were closed to civic type. It allowed her to introduce the second dimension in the typology of nationalism that was the distinction between individualistic and collective nationalisms. While the first considers the members of nation as free and equal individuals, the second gives quite distinct interpretation of a nation, notably, as a collective individual, endowed with a will and interest of its own, which are independent of and take priority over the wills and interests of individuals. Greenfeld concludes that collective nationalism can be either civic (France) or ethnic (Russia and Germany) but individualistic (liberal) nationalism can correlate with only civic type (Greenfeld, 1992).

Nonetheless, further findings have uncovered significant limitations of 'civic versus ethnic' dichotomy. Bernard Yack argues that such contradiction is something like delusion since one can reveal ethnic background in each case of civic nationalisms. "The political identity of the French, the Canadian, or the American is not based on a set of rationally chosen political principles. No matter how much residents of the United States might sympathize with political principles favored by most French or Canadian citizens, it would not occur to them to think of themselves as French or Canadian. An attachment of certain political principles maybe a necessary condition of loyalty to the national community for many citizens of contemporary democracies; they are very far from a sufficient condition for that loyalty" (Yack, 1999, p. 106). Yack disagrees with the possibility of purely rational civic nationalism and in this sense he claims that any nationalism is based on myths and irrational sentiments. His view is confirmed by some other researchers. In particular, Samuel Huntington in his well-known investigation of American political identity, which is undoubtedly the most typical example of civic nationalism, treats basic notions of American identity as 'dogmas', 'civic religion', etc. Moreover, he convincingly demonstrates that

[2] As Pierre Bourdieu has convincingly argued, the struggle over naming, counting, classifying, etc. is the core of political activity, since they are these discursive practices that construct and transform political stratifications and, ultimately, establish definite political order (Bourdieu, 1987).

[3] Sometimes the term 'nationalism' is used for the designation of disrespectful attitudes toward people of other ethnic groups in everyday life but it is not always accurate. The feeling of hostility (ethnic, tribe, race and so forth) can be called nationalism only if it is accompanied by political aspiration. Such, the slogans like "Russia for Russians", "Beat Jews and rescue Russia" have obvious political connotation. However, not all demonstrations of the feeling of ethnic hostility pertain to nationalism.

at least some sources of American national identity (WASP – White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) have obviously ethnic origin (Huntington, 2004).

In view of these arguments it seems to be reasonable to transform 'civic versus nation' dichotomy. Also, I suppose, transformed typology of nationalism should be based on 'ways of national identity building' rather than the content of nationalists ideas as such. Firstly, since nationalism always contains ethnic component, it would be more fruitful to focus on the way of thinking about the national membership. In this context Brubaker's comparative study of French and German nationhood is of significant importance. Brubaker has highlighted that French and German idioms of nationhood differ markedly, "If the French understanding of nationhood has been state-centered and assimilationist, the German understanding has been Volk-centered and differentialist" (Brubaker, 1992, p. 1). This distinction is particularly embodied and expressed in the definition of citizenship – relatively open in France and remarkably closed for non-German immigrants in Germany. It does not mean that French nationhood excludes ethnicity as such but French citizenship to a great extent entails also assimilation in the ethnic sense. In Germany, conversely, ethnic features control access to national membership. Consequently, Brubaker's criteria of 'model of national membership' (the degree of openness/closeness or inclusiveness/exclusiveness) would be the first dimension of the transformed typology of nationalism.

Secondly, since nationalism is a worldview that is assigned to legitimate modern political order, it has to be to some extent civic. The perception of the social reality through the prism of dividing the world into nations is the specific categorization that allows making a distinction between the people producing feeling of belonging to the nation. Nevertheless, 'civic component' may also show itself in what would be called as 'civicism' which is the perception of all members of the nation as equal individuals. It means that in public interactions citizens hold universalistic patterns of behavior. Such universalism is strongly opposed to particularism of pre-modern polities, but pre-modern particularism may either withhold or transform in the process of nation-building. If that is the case, the nation is perceived by people as a whole entity but the entity that is segmented into some groups which are organized in a hierarchical order in respect of the nation. While universalistic model of relations between citizens assumes that hierarchical status was to be achieved, in particularistic model status was to be assigned at birth. Thus, the second dimension of the transformed typology of nationalism – 'model of interactions among members' (universalism versus particularism) – would be whether there is 'civicism' in nationalists image of the nation. To some extent 'civicism' correlates to Greenfeld's distinction between individualistic and collective nationalisms but it is not the same.

Consequently, I offer two dimensions (axes) for the typology of nationalism. Overlapping, they give us four types which are presented in Table 1.

In contrast to Greenfeld's typology, transformed version allows us to distinguish four but not three types of nationalism. The first and the forth types are fairly closed to traditional 'civic versus ethnic' dichotomy. The first class of nations is based on the worldview which allows them to include individuals regardless of their race, ethnic, religious, and other qualities. Also, such worldview assigns citizens to relate to each other equally regardless of their group belonging. It means that political hierarchy is presumably grounded on personal achievements. Anglo-Saxon and French nationalisms can be referents of the type. The forth class is based on quite opposite perception of the world. A nation is constructed around specific group, usually ethnic group; therefore, the access to the national membership is fairly hard. The second and the third types are something intermediate. Worldview of nations of the second type demands from citizens interacting with each other on universal patterns regardless of their group belonging. Nevertheless, it is accompanied by fairly hard requirements for the recognition of membership in the nation. Contemporary Germany seems to pertain to the type. Finally, the third class of nations, conversely, is based on such understanding of nationhood which welcomes admission of new members to the national membership but the nation differentiated into some groups which are in hierarchical order.

Table 1
Types of nationalism.

Model of interactions among members	Model of national membership	
	Openness (inclusiveness)	Closeness (exclusiveness)
Universalism (hierarchical status was to be achieved)	I	II
Particularism (hierarchical status was to be assigned at birth)	III	IV

3. The image of Russian nation in the Kremlin discourse

Many sources are available for studying political discourse in contemporary Russia. They range on the basis of genre – speeches, writings, interviews, etc. It is also possible to divide the sources into some categories depending on their origin – authorship (the Presidents of the Russian Federation, deputies of the State Duma, Government officials, Kremlin officials or advisers, pro-government media, etc). Maria Gavrilova analyzes discursive articulations of such concepts as 'narod' (people), 'vlast' (power), and 'Russia' in inauguration speeches of the Russian Presidents (4 speeches – 1991, 1996, 2000 and 2004) (Gavrilova, 2006). Ekaterina Levintova extends the scope of sources to include a wide range of texts (250 units) which were produced by 26 most influential experts – so-called 'intellectual elite' (of both pro-government and opposition orientations) (Levintova, 2002).

The sampling of sources for this article is dictated by its purpose. Inasmuch as the object of the analysis is official (Kremlin) discourse, I use the 'most official' data – speeches of the Presidents. At the same time, the inauguration speeches seem to be insufficient in respect to both quantity (5 units) and quality (this kind of speeches are overly ceremonial and triumphant). Therefore, I focus on the

Annual Addresses of the President to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. Some specific features of these texts make them appropriate for the paper's goal. Firstly, the practice of official addressing of the President to the Federal Assembly goes back to 1994. Not one year was missed. Hence, I have available 14 addresses including 6 authored by President Yeltsin, 7 authored by President Putin, and 1 authored by President Medvedev. Secondly, annual addresses are very official speeches. As well known, documents like these are prepared over a long time by the teams of the best Kremlin experts, speechwriters, and advisers. They are subject to careful deliberations. Generally, they reflect official worldviews as much as possible. Thus, I have analyzed what image of Russian nation is produced by the Presidents in their addresses from the standpoint of the typology of nationalism developed above. Some results are presented below.

3.1. Russianness

First and foremost, one specific feature of the term of 'Russians' in Russian language has to be taken into account. There are two words which are translated in English as 'Russians'. The first is '*rossiyane*'. It is 'rossiayne' that is associated with 'Russian nation' and nationalism. The second – '*russkie*' – has strongly ethnic connotation that is similar to 'ethnic German', 'ethnic Chinese', etc. in respect of the members of the Western nations who are descendants from Germany, China, etc. respectively. Consequently, what is the correlation between 'rossiayne' and 'russkie' in the Presidents' speeches is of special importance. Some pieces of the Russian Presidents' Addresses that are more relevant in answering the question are examined below.[4]

The first remarkable topic is so-called 'Russian-speaking population' in New Independent States – the former Republics of the Soviet Union. It has been the issue of great importance after the USSR's collapse. Already the first Address delivered in 1994, President Yeltsin gave consideration to the issue: "In all spheres of relations with the countries of CIS and Baltic we should permanently focus on the concerns of the Russians ('rossiyane') who come to be abroad. Wherever they live, our compatriots have to feel themselves enjoying full rights and equal rights". In the next Address (1995) he declared again: "We should pay special attention to our citizens and compatriots living abroad". Almost the same idea is presented in the next addresses (1997, 1998, 1999, 2001). The Presidents use the term 'compatriots' ('*sootechestvenniki*') in respect to the definite sort of people. Who are they? How do the Presidents identify compatriots within the CIS and Baltics states citizens?

In 2003, President Putin made an attempt to conceptualize the idea of 'compatriots' more precisely and distinguished two categories of 'compatriots'. The first group was the persons who have arrived in Russia from the CIS countries, but had no Russian citizenship: "Currently, over a million people who came to Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union and before the new law on citizenship was passed have found themselves in an extremely difficult situation… These people who came to Russia have lived and worked in this country, taken part in its political life, and many of them have served in the Russian army. And now they are persons without citizenship in their own country". The second group was those who were outside Russia. Putin called for the softening of immigration policy "particularly for residents of the Commonwealth of Independent States. For people who are close to us and with whom we have a good understanding, and with whom we share the same language. These are people of our common Russian culture". It is this phrase that provides the most essential definition of a part of the CIS population as 'Russians': "close to us", "good understanding", "the same language", "common Russian culture". In 2005, Putin defined as "compatriots" tens of millions people living abroad: "Above all, we should acknowledge that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the century. As for the Russian nation, it became a genuine drama. Tens of millions of our co-citizens and compatriots found themselves outside Russian territory".

At the same time, the analysis shows that the Russian Presidents know the term 'russkie' in the sense of 'ethnic Russians' but they use it in quite limited cases, specifically when they speak about interethnic relations in some regions (first of all, in so-called 'national republics' such as Tatarstan or Bashkortostan). Speaking 'rossiyane', the Presidents never reduce this term to 'ethnic russkie'. On the contrary, they underscored the multiethnic sense of the concept: "the foundation of sovereign authority in the Russian Federation is its multinational people" (1995). References to cultural commonalities run through all Presidents' addresses. In 1995, it was marked that '"it is the domestic culture that provides integrity of the nation, develops and strengthens original spirituality and humanism". The same idea sounded in 1998 and 1999. President Putin also more than once (2004, 2005) spoke about common culture as one of the foundations of "Russianness".

Consequently, we are able to make a reasonable conclusion that neither ethnicity nor citizenship, but cultural commonality is assumed as the definition of 'Russianness' in the presidential speeches. Acquirement of the Russian culture is opened for any person who desires to become a part of the Russian nation. Russian population includes a lot of ethnic groups, and all of them are assumed as 'rossiyane' provided that they share 'Russian culture'.

It is worth to note that the definition of 'Russianness' in the official discourse is corresponded to a great extent to mass orientations and attitudes. Sociological surveys show that 'Russianness' is perceived presumably in non-ethnic definitions. Thus, in the middle of 1990s, respondents were asked what features were obvious for 'Russianness'. The distribution of responses was as follows (in descending order): 'love of Russia' – 87%; 'love of Russian culture and habits' – 84%; 'Russian language' – 80%; 'self-perception' – 79%; 'Russian citizenship' – 56%; 'signing as Russian in the

[4] Hereinafter all quotations are from the official site of Russian Presidents: http://president.kremlin.ru/eng/sdocs/speeches.shtml?stype=127286 (Annual Addresses of the Presidents to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. 1994–2008).

passport' – 51%; 'Russian parents' – 51% (one of the parents) and 24% (both parents); 'Russian character' – 50%; 'orthodox faith' – 43%; 'Russian residents' – 32%; 'Russian appearance' – 22% (Klyamkin & Lapkin, 1995, p. 87). In the 2000s, the understanding of 'Russianness' has not changed. Responding to the question who can be assumed as Russian, 41% choose the answer 'those who share Russian culture'; 36% 'those who love Russia'; 29% – 'those who perceive themselves as Russian'. At the same time only 26% of the respondents considered ancestry ('Russian parents') and 10% – citizenship – as the main feature (Tikhonova, 2007, p. 172).

3.2. Russian culture: language and values

Treatment of the national culture as the foundation of 'Russianness' is not an extraordinary phenomenon. Strictly speaking, any nationalism is nothing more than a common worldview that is the set of cultural senses. The matter is what senses are understood as Russian culture. Giving the definition of Russian culture, the Presidents pay great attention to the Russian language, but they prefer to designate it as 'common language', 'one language' (2003), avoiding the word 'Russian'. Consequently, Russian language is of great importance not as such but as a mean of acquirement of the Russian culture and has rather inclusive than exclusive effect.

The Addresses contain some references to special values and features that are inherent to the Russians. The Presidents repeatedly made statements about the presence of shared values. In three addresses (1996, 2003, 2008) they attempted to uncover the 'Russian values' in more detail. President Yeltsin put the question directly: "I see the future Russia as the country in which citizens, irrespective of their political opinions, are integrated by adherence to fundamental ideals and values. What are they? How do I understand them?" The answer was: democratic statehood, civic consciousness, and patriotism. It is remarkable that Yeltsin cited Russian statesman of the beginning of XX century Petr Stolypin: "Actual liberty is a sum of civic freedom and the feeling of statehood and patriotism". In 2003, Putin highlighted key points differently. He specified as the main value not "democratic statehood" but "maintaining the state spread over vast territory": "It is my conviction that without consolidation at the least around basic national values and objectives, we will not be able to withstand these threats. I would like to recall that throughout our history Russia and its people have accomplished and continue to accomplish a truly historical feat, a great work performed in the name of our country's integrity and in the name of bringing it peace and a stable life. Maintaining a state spread over such a vast territory and preserving a unique community of peoples while keeping up a strong presence on the international stage is not just an immense labour, it is also a task that has cost our people untold victims and sacrifice. Such has been Russia's historic fate over these thousand and more years. Such has been the way Russia has continuously emerged as a strong nation. It is our duty never to forget this, and we should remember it now, too, as we examine the threats we face today and the main challenges to which we must rise".

The theme of national values was actually the focus of the first Address of President Medvedev. He placed the topic in the starting part of his speech: "Now I would like to speak about our values. They are well known. There is justice, which we understand as political equality, honest courts and responsible leaders. Justice is embodied in practice as social guarantees and the fight against poverty and corruption, the efforts to give each individual a decent place in our society and give the Russian nation as a whole a worthy place in the system of international relations. There is freedom – personal, individual freedom. It means economic freedom, freedom of speech and religion, freedom to choose one's place of residence and one's job. And there is general national freedom, the independence and freedom of the Russian state. There is the welfare and dignity of human life. There is interethnic peace and the unity of diverse cultures. There is protection for small peoples, and the recognition of South Ossetia's and Abkhazia's independence is an example of this protection. There are family traditions, love and faithfulness, care for the young and for the old. There is patriotism, along with the most sober and critical look at our country's history and our far from ideal present, belief in Russia that shines through no matter what the circumstances, deep-rooted love for our native land and our great culture. These are our values, the foundations of our society and our moral beacons. To put things more simply, it is these self-evident things that we all understand that are what make us a single people, what make us Russia. These are the things that we will never give up no matter what the circumstances. Our values form our vision of the future. We aspire to a fair society of free people. We know that Russia will be a prosperous and democratic country. It will be a strong country that offers its people a comfortable life. It will be the best country in the world for the most talented, demanding, independent and critically-inclined citizens".

It is not hard to note that the rhetoric of Medvedev has changed in comparison with Putin. Medvedev refers to freedom, democracy, responsible leaders, etc; and in this sense he is somewhere between Yeltsin and Putin. In general, one can find some disagreements in presidential addresses in understanding what Russian values are but beyond the differences all Russian Presidents strongly focus on such values as statehood and patriotism.

In regard to the value of statehood, one can discover that the key definitions of Russian statehood in the presidential addresses are connected with rather 'external' than 'internal' features. First of all, in all addresses such definition of Russia as 'great' is emphasized. It has both geopolitical (territory, size, resources) and international connotations. The second definition is 'strong' Russia. It is remarkable that while the attribute 'great' is used by Yeltsin and Putin equally, the definition 'strong' has received development only since 2000. Putin used it in every address, 5 times in 2000, 9 times in 2003. "If Russia remains weak, we really will have to make the former choice. And it will be the choice of a weak state. It will be the choice of the weak. The only real choice for Russia is the choice of a strong country. A country that is strong and confident of itself" (2000). "Now we must take the next step and focus all our decisions and all our action on ensuring that in a not

too far off future, Russia will take its recognized place among the ranks of the truly strong, economically advanced and influential nations. And all our decisions, all our actions – to subordinate to that already in the foreseeable future Russia has strongly taken a place among really strong, economically advanced and influential states of the world… Our entire historical experience shows that a country like Russia can live and develop within its existing borders only if it is a strong nation. All of the periods during which Russia has been weakened, whether politically or economically, have always and inexorably brought to the fore the threat of the country's collapse" (2003).

It is not hard to notice that the definitions of 'great' and 'strong' are similar expressions but place different emphases. Whereas 'great Russia' means, more likely, potential capabilities of the country, 'strong Russia' expresses rather the realization of this potential. 'Strong' in Putin's addresses appears in different contexts such as in references to armed forces development, economic growth, etc. However the most obvious connotation of 'strong' is related to international relations. 'Strong Russia' is assumed as an independent and powerful actor: "Ours is a free nation. And our place in the modern world, I wish to particularly emphasize this, will only depend on how strong and successful we are."

3.3. Russian idea

In order to better understand why the value of statehood in the sense of 'great' and 'strong' Russia is so important we have to place it in a broader context that refers the vision of Russia's place in the world history. As it is well known, for a long time the thesis of 'Russian way' ('Russian idea') remains to be one of the key points in the Russian political discourse. The idea is fairly vague but, generally, it emphasizes uniqueness of the Russian civilization and its cultural originality. Russians are viewed as the people of great historical mission, as those who inherited special 'spirituality' ('*duchovnost*'). It has to be noted that 'spirituality' is not assumed as any natural (primordial) feature of 'ethnic Russians'. Conversely, those who acquire 'spirituality' are included in 'Russians' as the nation.

Russian 'uniqueness' has already occurred in early presidential addresses. In 1996, President Yeltsin emphasized: "We are frequently frightened by the loss of the Russian originality. I am confident, it will not take place. Russia is the whole world which originality was kept during all Russian history". At the same time the President pointed out that the Russian specificity is accompanied by openness and receptivity. By and large, the Presidents have kept the similar approach during the entire period. On the one hand, almost in all addresses Russia is defined as "open for international integration", "willing to participate in the building of 'the Big Europe'", etc. On the other hand, 'uniqueness', 'originality', 'own way', etc. are always emphasized. Already in 1999 Yeltsin declared: "For these years we have understood that a universal way of social development does not exist. But it would be the deepest mistake to assume Russian own way as self-isolation. The only means to realize our huge potential is the recognition of both the originality of Russia and its involvement in the global world".

Putin's and Medvedev's position on this point has not essentially differed from Yeltsin's, but the stress on 'uniqueness' has been stronger. The most noteworthy is the 2005 address where Putin developed the concept of 'sovereign democracy'. "Russia is a country that has chosen democracy through the will of its own people. It chose this road of its own accord and it will decide itself how best to ensure that the principles of freedom and democracy are realized here, taking into account our historic, geopolitical and other particularities and respecting all fundamental democratic norms. As a sovereign nation, Russia can and will decide for itself the timeframe and conditions for its progress along this road."

Almost all researchers share the opinion that idea of 'Russian special way' has deep roots in mass consciousness. Nevertheless, usually they point to the same vagueness of this idea in people's minds as in the official discourse. On the basis of his own study Boris Dubin concludes that the function of the idea is not to give any definitions of 'Russianness', but rather to fix Russian 'exclusiveness', 'non-belonging to the world'. Dubin points out that "the West in Russian mind is the indication to the 'significant Other'. The West is actually the synonym of the border of self-identification. It is the border that is, paradoxically, drawn outside. The West, but not Russia is the sensed point. Russia as the concept can be derived only from the West. It is the "secondary phenomenon" which is perceived just through "non-belonging" to the West" (Dubin, 2000, p. 31). In line with this finding Lev Gudkov developed the concept of "negative identity". He argues that "community is constituted by a reference to the negative factor – alien or hostile – that becomes the necessary prerequisite for group solidarity. The members of the community are perceived themselves as such only in the framework of this opposition to the Other" (Gudkov, 2000, p. 37).

Furthermore, 'Russian idea' includes the feeling of accountability for the humankind, especially for small nations which need help and support. The thesis about 'special historical mission', which was quite typical in the Soviet period, can be revealed in the presidential addresses. In 2005, President Putin mentioned that "Russia should continue its civilizing mission on the Eurasian continent. This mission consists in ensuring that democratic values, combined with national interests, enrich and strengthen our historic community". Medvedev in 2008 also pointed out special mission of Russia. In his interpretation one of the values of special importance is the "protection for small peoples", and he cited the cases of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as examples of successful accomplishment of this mission.

In the context of 'Russian idea' the value of statehood takes on special significance. Statehood matters not so much in itself but as the means of the achievement of Russian destination. 'Russian state' is surely neither 'Western state' (the institution of civic cooperation) nor 'ethnic state' (the institution of ethnic exclusion) but necessary institution for the movement toward 'Russian way'. At the same time, 'great and strong Russia' is one of

the key evidences of this movement, since it means that other nations recognize the special significance of Russia.

3.4. Russian 'sobornost' and patriotism

In spite of the great attention given to "internal" characteristics of Russian state in the Presidents' addresses, many of definitions such as 'democratic', 'stability', etc. were not articulated an intelligible image but the other group – 'unity', 'accordance', 'consolidation' – is much more understandable. All presidential addresses are saturated by them. Russian nation is certainly perceived by the Kremlin as an entity consolidated around the state. But it is only at the first glance like a Greenfeld's 'collective nationalism' which claims a priority of collective (national) interests over individual ones (Greenfeld, 1992). Russian national 'unity' would be much more strictly designated by the concept of '*sobornost.*' Comprehensive analysis of the concept, which derives from sacral (orthodox) discourse, was undertaken by Nikolay Biryukov and Viktor Sergeev. They distinguish the main features of this phenomenon: "If the people are assumed as something like the whole totality, there is no need to seek any mutually coordinated decision. The decision is conceived as evident and forcible obligatoriness in relation to all the members of community, including the decision-makers. The only procedure that would be needed is securing of totality of the people as such. It causes to the idea of "sobornost" that is the central idea of such type of worldview" (Biryukov & Sergeev, 1992, p. 29).

While in 'collective nationalism', as in France, national interests are usually the subject of discussion; and they are defined through political process, 'sobornost' presupposes that national interests have been already known, self-evident, and unquestionable; and it is the destination of Russia ('Russian way') that is the key undisputed issue. Consequently, meaningful of 'unity' does not concern governmental policies, since in the face of 'Russian destination' policy issues are all questions of secondary importance. Russians can be dissatisfied with policy-making but they are inclined to 'forgive' the ruling elite provided that the state is in keeping of Russian idea.[5]

The idea of 'sobornost' is closely related to the value of patriotism. In regard to 'patriotism', in 1996 Yeltsin developed a fairly comprehensive definition: "For me patriotism is a special state of mind, when the person is living by a pain of Fatherland, feeling of affiliation to its triumphs and defeats, feeling a pride in the national traditions, of a belonging to the great country". Putin supported the same view of patriotism: "a feeling of a pride in the country" and "a love of the native land". Both Presidents used the metaphor of 'home': "We have to support and strengthen the feeling of the common home" (1998); "Russia is above all the people who consider this country to be their home" (2000). President Medvedev also focused on emotional feelings. He understood patriotism as "belief in Russia that shines through no matter what the circumstances, deep-rooted love for our native land and our great culture". Consequently, patriotism, from the Russian presidents' point of view, is not simply the feeling of affiliation to the motherland. It has much more strong sense and includes the idea of self-sacrificingness in the name of Russian idea. Such a connotation is possible only in the framework of 'sobornost'.

The stress on patriotism, obviously, is accompanied by references to Russian history. There are repeatedly references to the historical commonality (1999, 2003, 2005). Since patriotism is determined as a 'pride in the country', the Presidents refer to those events and figures of the past which have symbolic and unifying meaning. So, Putin spoke about the heroic feats, which were made in the name of Russia, and repeatedly mentioned the Great Patriotic war. As a whole, it is possible to say, that since 2000 the historical component has been amplified. In particular, 'rehabilitation' of the Soviet period has taken place. In 1996 the Soviet system was presumably viewed negatively: "the Communist project has not stood the test for the big historical distance. … The Soviet Union has failed under the weight of universal crisis due to economic, political and social contradictions". In 2005, there was quite the opposite evaluation: "we should acknowledge that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a major geopolitical disaster of the century".

4. Conclusion

The analysis of Annual Addresses of the Russian Presidents to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation allows making the conclusion that the Kremlin perceives Russians as a nation in neither narrow 'ethnic' nor pure 'civic' senses. The Presidents strongly focus on multiethnic meaning of Russians, which is apparently emphasized through the special concept of 'rossiyane'. Nevertheless, it does not mean that 'rossiyane' embrace and are restricted to the citizens of Russia. The key feature of 'Russianness' in the Kremlin discourse is the commitment to the Russian culture: language, history, values of statehood and patriotism, the idea of the strong and great Russia, uniqueness of the Russian civilization. Anyone can be recognized as 'Russian' as long as he/she shares these values. Judging by the presidential addresses, the Kremlin recognizes as 'Russian' even those who are not Russian citizens but committed to the Russian culture. Consequently, from the point of the first dimension of nationalism (model of national membership), Russian nationalism (at least in official version) certainly demonstrates openness (inclusiveness), maybe even over-openness.

At the same time, such over-openness is possible only if nationalist worldview neglects citizenship. Indeed, if a cultural commonality is a necessary condition for the national membership, while a citizenship is not a sufficient condition, we have a nation with very weak component of 'civicism'. Next, in contrast to 'civicism', which is based on rather rational notions of equal rights and responsibilities and universalistic patterns of behavior, the Kremlin image

[5] It is quite remarkable that talking about performance of everyday policies respondents evaluated President Putin not very high. For example, in 2006 only 31% supposed that Putin was successful in economic policy, 37% – in Chechen conflict resolution while the general trust in Putin was on incredibly high level (more than 70%) (Obschestvennoe Mnenie–2006, 2007, Table 7.2.11).

of Russian nation focuses on rather sacral idea of 'Russian way', great historical mission as the destination of Russia. The notion of 'sobornost' dismisses Russians from active and conscious participation in political process. Finally, openness of nationalism entails (at least, potentially) permanent expansion of the nation 'outside itself' in order to 'absorb' those groups who are able to accept the Russian culture. Such acceptance requires definite period of time. It means that in any moment Russian nation includes both 'core of the nation' and 'aspirants' whish are in hierarchical order. Consequently, from the point of the second dimension of nationalism (model of interaction among members), Russian nationalism falls into the category of particularism. Hierarchical status here is rather 'to be assigned' than 'to be achieved'.

One can suggest that specificity of Russian official nationalism is explained by historical reasons, first of all, imperial legacies. Indeed, Russian nationalism in some aspects resembles imperial worldview, although, it is certainly the special sort of nationalism. However, this issue is not the focus of the article and requires additional research.

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